

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 07774 180944Z
ACTION NEA-11

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1657
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S E C R E T NEW DELHI 7774

STADIS////////////////////////////////

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MNUCH, TECH, IN
SUBJECT: NUCLEAR TOPICS

REFS: A. STATE 122710; B. NEW DELHI 7474

1. ACTING ON INSTRUCTIONS IN REFTTEL A, I CALLED AGAIN TODAY ON V. SHANKAR. I FOUND HIM SENSITIVE TO OUR DESIRE TO KEEP THE SAFEGURADS ISSUES AS OPEN AS POSSIBLE FOR THE TIME WHEN THE PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER WILL MEET TO DISCUSS THEM IN PERSON. HE HIMSELF WILL BE DRAFTING THE PM'S SSOD SPEECH AND EXPECTS THAT IT WILL HOLD TO A HIGH LEVEL OF GENERALITY. HE IS LESS CONFIDENT THAT THE PM WILL AVOID SPECIFICS WHEN FACED BY THE PRESS (AS HE WILL BE SEVERAL TIMES BETWEEN THE TIME OF HIS ARRIVAL IN NEW YORK AND HIS GETTING TO WASHINGTON), BUT SHANKAR SAID THAT HE WOULD TALK WITH THE PM ABOUT THIS DANGER AND COUNSEL HIM TO TRY TO AVOID RESPONSES THAT TENDED TO FORECLOSE ANY POSSIBLE MEETING OF MINDS BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND HIMSELF.

2. SHANKAR THEN RAISED AGAIN THE QUESTIONS OF JUST WHAT WE MEAN BY FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS AND THEIR EFFECTS

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ON RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT. HE SAID THAT INDIA'S LEADING SCIENTISTS, INCLUDING BOTH SETHNA AND RAMANA, HAVE CONVINCED THE PM THAT WHAT WE ARE ASKING FOR WILL IN FACT IMPEDE INDIA'S WORK ON PEACEFUL NUCLEAR ENERGY. WHEN I REMINDED HIM OF THE ASSURANCES THAT NYE AND OTHERS HAVE GIVEN TO THE CONTRARY--INCLUDING THE NUMBER OF COUNTRIES THAT HAVE SIGNED THE NPT AND STILL SEEM TO

MANAGE TO CARRY ON VIGOROUS NUCLEAR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT--HE SAID, "SETHNA REMAINS UNCONVINCED".

3. SHANKAR SPECIFICALLY ASKED WHO OUR TOP SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR IN ON THESE MATTERS, A QUESTION I COULD NOT ANSWER. HE SUGGESTED THAT IT MIGHT BE DESIRABLE TO HAVE SETHNA PRECEDE THE PM TO WASHINGTON BY A FEW DAYS TO EXPLORE THIS QUESTION OF THE INHIBITING EFFECTS OF SAFEGUARDS IN AN OBJECTIVE AND SCIENTIFIC WAY, SO THAT HE COULD BRIEF THE PM PRIOR TO HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER. HE SAID HE WOULD RAISE THIS POSSIBILITY WITH SETHNA WHOM THEY HAD BEEN CONSIDERING ADDING TO THE PM'S PARTY IN ANY CASE. IN TURN I SAID THAT I WOULD ASK WASHINGTON WHO WOULD BE THE BEST PERSON OR PERSONS FOR SETHNA TO MEET AND WHAT YOU THINK OF THE MERITS OF SUCH A MEETING. PLEASE ADVISE ASAP.
GOHEEN

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NNN

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